

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 084629 TOSEC 030172

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS, FOR SECRETARY VANCE, DR BRZEZINSKI

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 4393 ACTION STATE INFO CAIRO APR 1.

QUOTE S E C R E T TEL AVIV 4393

EXDIS DIST AS NODIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, EG, IS, US

SUBJ: WEIZMAN VISIT--PRELIMINARY ISRAELI VERSION

REF: CAIRO 9802

1. MOST OF WHAT I KNOW THUS FAR ABOUT THE WEIZMAN TRIP TO EGYPT COMES FROM THE ACCOUNT IN REFTEL OF MUBARAK'S BRIEFING FOR AMBASSADOR EILTS. THE LID IS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY ON PRETTY TIGHTLY HERE FOR THE MOMENT. I ANTICIPATE SEEING BEGIN AND WEIZMAN BEFORE MONDAY MORNING, HOWEVER, AND SHOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN A REASONABLY DETAILED ISRAELI VIEW OF WHAT TRANSPIRED.

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2. GOI HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY LACONIC WITH THE PRESS THUS FAR, AND ALL NEWSPAPERS, TELEVISION AND RADIO JOURNALISTS GO OUT ON INDEFINITE STRIKE AT 9 P.M. TONIGHT, SATURDAY, APRIL 1. THERE WILL PERHAPS BE INFORMATION SEEPING OUT AS USUAL TO JOURNALISTS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, BUT THEY WILL HAVE NO WAY TO PRINT IT.

3. I WAS LUNCHING WITH DAYAN WHEN WEIZMAN RETURNED MARCH 31. HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED A PRELIMINARY TELEPHONE REPORT FROM BEGIN TO EFFECT THAT WEIZMAN VISIT HAD PRODUCED LITTLE MOVEMENT. BARAK TELEPHONED DAYAN DURING LUNCH TO SAY THE SAME THING, THEN BRIEFED DAYAN LATER IN THE EVENING IN DETAIL, AS DID WEIZMAN. (ONE ODDITY OF ALL THIS WHICH REFLECTS THE CONSIDERABLE STATE OF INTERNAL POLITICAL TENSION WITHIN THE BEGIN CABINET IS THAT BEGIN RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL REPORTS FIRST FROM WEIZMAN, AND THEN FROM BARAK, AND DID NOT INVITE DAYAN TO ATTEND THE DEBRIEFING. SUBSEQUENTLY, BARAK AND WEIZMAN, AGAIN SEPARATELY, CAME TO DAYAN'S HOUSE TO FILL HIM IN. SINCE DAYAN, I THINK GENUINELY, PROTESTS A GREAT ADMIRATION FOR BARAK'S SKILL AND INTEGRITY, THE IMPLICATION HERE IS THAT THE BEGIN-DAYAN-WEIZMAN RELATIONSHIP IS CURRENTLY BOTH QUITE TRICKY AND ALSO SUFFERING SOME STRAINS.)

4. ABOUT 8 P.M. LAST NIGHT (MARCH 31) DAYAN TELEPHONED ME AT HOME TO SAY THAT BARAK'S AND WEIZMAN'S BRIEFINGS FOR HIM CONFIRMED HIS EARLIER CONCLUSION THAT THE NEGOTIATING SITUATION HAS NOT BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ALTERED BY WEIZMAN'S TRIP. HE SAID "THERE WERE SOME VERY INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE POINTS MADE BY SADAT, BUT THEY DON'T CHANGE THE PICTURE." HE PROMISED THAT WEIZMAN WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME SHORTLY TO GIVE ME A DETAILED FILL IN.

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5. WEIZMAN TELEPHONED 15 MINUTES LATER. HE SAID THE MEETINGS WERE "FAIR;" THAT HE WAS HAPPY SADAT HAD AGREED HIS MILITARY STAFF TEAM SHOULD REMAIN IN PLACE IN CAIRO, BUT THAT NOTHING VERY SUBSTANTIAL HAD BEEN ACHIEVED BY THE TWO CONVERSATIONS. HE INSISTED THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS "AS WARM IN A PERSONAL SENSE AS EVER," BUT ADMITTED THAT SADAT HAD RESTATED HIS VIEWS ON ALL OF THE KEY ISSUES WITHOUT CHANGE AND THAT HE HAD "MADE NO BREAK-THROUGHS."

6. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS, WEIZMAN SAID THAT BARAK HAD BEEN WITH HIM IN ALL OF THE MEETINGS, "WHICH GAVE HIM A CREDIBLE WITNESS." HE FOUND SADAT MORE RELAXED ABOUT THE TIMETABLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND THE CURRENT IMPASSE THAN HE HAD EXPECTED. GAMASY HAD HINTED TO WEIZMAN THAT SADAT WAS NERVOUS; HE WAS NOT. HE MADE CLEAR TO WEIZMAN THAT HE WANTED TO CONTINUE THE PEACE INITIATIVE AND HAD NO INTENTION OF PULLING BACK; NOR DID HE SHOW ANY SIGNS OF RELAXING HIS DEMANDS. WEIZMAN DID NOT EXCLUDE HIS RETURNING FOR A LATER VISIT TO CAIRO, BUT USED SIGNIFICANTLY THE PHRASE "WHENEVER SADAT WISHES ME TO GO." APPARENTLY THERE WAS HARDLY ANY CON-

VERSATION ABOUT LEBANON. SADAT MERELY ASKED WEIZMAN TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT ISRAEL'S INTENTIONS TO WITHDRAW, WHICH WEIZMAN SAID HE WAS HAPPY TO DO--SPECIFYING THAT ISRAEL WOULD WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AS SOON AS THE UN FORCES WERE FULLY DEPLOYED.

7. ILLUSTRATIVE OF WHAT WEIZMAN CHARACTERIZED AS SADAT'S "SELF-CONFIDENCE AND RELAXED ATTITUDE," SADAT TOLD HIM THAT KING KHALID HAD URGED HIM NOT TO INVITE WEIZMAN AT THIS TIME. SADAT CLAIMED HIS RESPONSE HAD BEEN TO INSIST THAT HE WOULD NOT BE DETERRED BY ANYONE FROM PURSUING HIS PEACE INITIATIVE.

8. WEIZMAN SAID HE WAS VERY TIRED AND DID NOT IN ANY
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EVENT THINK HE SHOULD GIVE ME MORE DETAILS OVER THE TELEPHONE. HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO REPORT TO THE CABINET ON SUNDAY, AND THAT THEN WE SHOULD MEET "EARLY NEXT WEEK" FOR A MORE DETAILED RUNDOWN. HE SOUNDED LIKE A MAN WHO WAS CONSIDERABLY SOBERED BY HIS CONVERSATIONS, NOT DESPAIRING BUT CERTAINLY NOT SEEING ANY LIGHT AT THE END OF HIS TUNNEL.

9. COMMENT: I WAS NOT SURPRISED TO SEE THE INDICATIONS IN MUBARAK'S BRIEFING FOR EILTS THAT WEIZMAN WAS UNHAPPY TO LEARN WE WOULD BE BRIEFED IN CAIRO ON THESE TALKS. AFTER THE DISCOURAGING OUTCOME OF THE WASHINGTON MEETINGS, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD TRY TO FIND A WAY TO WORK WITH SADAT WITHOUT THE HOT BREATH OF THE AMERICANS BREATHING CONTINUALLY DOWN THEIR NECKS. THERE IS CERTAIN NAIVETE IN BOTH BEGIN AND WEIZMAN IN THINKING THAT WE WILL NOT LEARN FROM THE EGYPTIANS MAY OF THE DETAILS WHETHER WE LEARN THEM HERE OR NOT. THIS TENDENCY TO TRY TO PLAY THEIR CARDS CLOSER TO THEIR CHESTS FIRST BECAME APPARENT AS FAR BACK AS THE REPORTS WE RECEIVED ON SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM AND LATER ON THE ISMAILIA MEETINGS. SADAT, FOR HIS OWN REASONS, WOULD APPARENTLY LIKE TO STAY IN COMPLETE LOCK-STEP WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AT EVERY STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, AS THE ISRAELIS FEEL THE ADMINISTRATION'S PRESSURE TO ESPOUSE POSITIONS THEY FEEL TO BE THREATENING, BEGIN AND COMPANY WILL INCREASINGLY WRIGGLE TO TRY TO STAY SOMEWHAT MORE INDEPENDENT OF THE OMNIPRESENT AMERICAN EYE. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ARE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THEIR NEED TO STAY ON GOOD TERMS WITH US, AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WE WILL LEARN AS MUCH HERE AS WE NEED TO ABOUT THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN CONNECTION AS SEEN FROM JERUSALEM. LEWIS
UNQUOTE COOPER
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